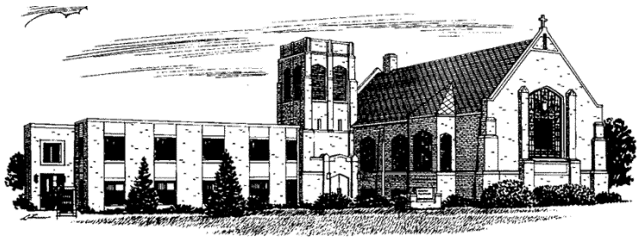


The Rev. Joan Oleson, Pastor
Home: 269-983-2475
Email: *oleson@saronlutheran.org*

Marcus Roll, Senior Choir Director,
Bell Choir Director
Email: roll1mc@gmail.com
Irma Gorman, Organist
Margaret Froehlich, Administrative Assistant
Megan Savage Financial Secretary
Email: financial@saronlutheran.org
Emily Gaul, Child Care

Typical Sunday Schedule at Saron:
During the School Year:
8:30 & 11:00 A.M. Worship
Childcare provided
9:40 Learning for Ages 2 – Adult

Summers (thru Labor Day weekend):
9:30 Holy Communion
Childcare provided
No Learning Hour

During the present Pandemic:
11:00 a.m. via Zoom

All are welcome!

We hold in prayer:
The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton,
Presiding Bishop, ELCA
The Rev. Dr. Craig Satterlee, Bishop of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod, ELCA
The Episcopal Diocese of Western MI

Our Companion Synods:

Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras
Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea
Lutheran Church of Latvia

Saron's Mission:
Joyfully sharing God's love for all!!

SARON NEWSLETTER

Saron Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA)
510 Main Street
St. Joseph, Michigan 49085

Website: www.saronlutheran.org
Email: info@saronlutheran.org
Phone: 269-983-1273
Facebook:
www.facebook.com/saronlutheranchurchst.joseph

September 2020

As noted in our August newsletter, September 13 is the tentative date set for returning to in-person indoor worship. At August's council meeting, it was determined that the following things need to be in place for that to happen. The governor's executive orders must allow indoor gatherings of more than 10 and suitable to our needs. We must be ready to open, such as supplies collected and volunteer help available and willing for building needs, such as cleaning and worship assistance. We must also feel comfortable that it is a decision that provides for the health and safety for those who will attend.

In early September watch for an e-mail (or U.S. mail if you do not have e-mail) that will ask you and/or your family members the likelihood of your attendance if we go back to in-person worship and the capacity to which you might be able to help. This will help greatly in our planning. Most supplies have been acquired and are on hand.

Sunday morning educational opportunities are still being formed and will be virtual. Confirmation classes will be held by Zoom from 9:30-10:00 each week. Lessons for children ages 4 years – 5th grade will be a combination of Zoom and home learning, as coordinated by our Learning Committee. Sunday morning adult studies are still being considered. Watch for details!

Along with these opportunities, watch for small, outdoor gatherings for Holy Communion.

As we plan, thank you for your patience. Be safe and healthy! *Pastor Joan*

NOTE: A letter to the congregation (and friends of Saron) regarding re-opening, as well as guidelines that Saron has put into place, can be found on the home page of Saron's website. www.saronlutheran.org

Caring and Sharing

In Our Prayers –

Arla Huelsberg and Richard Schalon are at the Whitcomb Tower Retirement Center, St. Joseph; **Bernice Koski** is at Woodland Terrace.

Office Hours at Saron (these hours will vary during Covid-19)
Margaret (secretary): Mon-Tues, 9 AM - 1 PM
Weds of Newsletter Week, 9 AM - 1 PM
Volunteers: Weds, 9:15 AM - 11 AM (approximately)
Financial Secretary: Megan Savage; Tues & Thurs 5:30 PM
financial@saronlutheran.org
Call the office for more information.
When Pastor is out of town, emergency pastoral care information can be obtained by calling the church office (983.1273) or contacting the president of the congregation.
Note: E-mails meant for Pastor should be addressed to oleson@saronlutheran.org. E-mails to Margaret and the church office should be addressed to info@saronlutheran.org.

Happy Birthday Wishes to Saron's Members in September 2020

Sept. 3 – Chelsea Knauf
4 – Nicole Coar
10 - David Siewert
12 - Charles Fortenbacher
13 - Sally Schmuhl
15 - Dan Fortenbacher
Deanna Deaton
16 - William Oleson
17 - John Olson
Jessica (Schmidt) Zubik
18 – Wendy Hoffman
Grant Gacek
19 - Rian Huff
20 - Todd Gorman
23 - David Stankiewicz
Kathy Cowall
24 - Suzanne Fortenbacher
Marybeth Culverhouse
25 - Colleen Lundgren
Kirsten (Talbert) Gulley

Happy Anniversary Wishes to Saron's Members in September 2020

Sept. 3 - Scott and Kate Kohs
7 - Peter and Karen Johnson
10 - John and Pam Olson
11 - Bill and Marge Teal
12 –Shawn and Heidi de la Foret

"God's Blessings for a very happy day and year round"

If there is anyone who has been omitted, or, if the dates are incorrect from the birthday and anniversary list, please call the church office at 983-1273. Thank you.

WITH SYMPATHY

We extend our sympathy to Mary Alice and Ed Brunner upon the death of Mary Alice's father on Monday, August 24.

God is our refuge and strength. Psalm 46:1a

PRAYER GROUP

Join us on Mondays at 11:00 a.m. for a time of quiet reflection and prayer. Presently, this happens individually in homes; please email any requests to oleson@saronlutheran.org. Thank you.

Baptism for Michelle McBarnes

Michelle McBarnes was baptized on July 30, 2020. Her sponsors are David Young and Emma Young.

A NOTE FROM BILL AND JANET OLESON

Dear Friends at Saron,

A week ago we received the surprise of many cards and letters that brought us such joy. We opened this large package and found so many wonderful cards each with a lovely message. We spent over an hour reading and absorbing each handwritten message.

We have been members of Saron for over seventeen years and those years hold many wonderful memories and friends that we have made.

We are planning on continuing our membership and support to Saron and will be back to visit as soon as this virus is under control meanwhile Saron's Sunday Zoom services, coffee hours and Bible studies have been a blessing.

Saron's ministry will always be close to our hearts.

Love, Janet and Bill Oleson

FORTIFY & fly

When I received notice that the repairs to the bell tower had been completed which means there should be no more leaking in the sanctuary and we can once again repair the inside of the wall, I thought to myself *I'm afraid to hope*. Then I immediately shook my head at myself. We should never be afraid to hope. Hope is part of the fire within us that keeps us strong.

We already know that we can manage disappointment, make adjustments, and try again when necessary so there is no downside to hope. I think I speak for many of us when I say Hooray! I can't wait to see the absence of the water damage in the sanctuary!

As of the end of July 2020, we had collected $263,966 towards our 3 year pledge total of $371,165. As always, thank you for your faithful giving and for being on this journey with us. We hope to see you soon!

Worship

FACEBOOK

We love to share pictures of Saron's ministry on our Facebook page and we get great feedback. It is our practice not to put names with the pictures. If you have questions, or prefer your picture not to appear, please contact Pastor.

SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS

As you prepare for worship, you are invited to read and reflect on the Scriptures for the day.

Sunday Sept. 6 –
Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Ezekiel 33:7-11
Psalm 119:33-40
Romans 13:8-14
Matthew 18:15-20

Sunday Sept. 13 –
Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Genesis 50:15-21
Psalm 103:[1-7] 8-13
Romans 14:1-12
Matthew 18:21-35

Sunday Sept. 20 –
Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Jonah 3:10-4:11
Psalm 145:1-8
Philippians 1:21-30
Matthew 20:1-16

Sunday Sept. 27 –
Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost
Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32
Psalm 25:1-9
Philippians 2:1-13
Matthew 21:23-32

Nursery News
Watch for more nursery news once we are back to in-person worship. For more information, contact Marilyn Lucy, Krin Jurgensen, or Pastor Oleson.

There will be NO worship or picnic at Tiscornia Park this Labor Day weekend, due to the pandemic and the inability to physically distance at the pavilion.

2020 FLOWER CALENDAR
The 2020 flower calendar is posted. Cost: $25.00/vase. This is an opportunity for you to give flowers in honor or memory of someone. The church orders the flowers (unless you indicate otherwise) and you can take the flowers home after 2nd service. We will resume the ordering of flowers when we are back to in-person worship.

HOW CAN I HELP?

Some of you have asked how you can help during this time of Covid-19. Here are some thoughts.
Make contact with friends and acquaintances, especially those who may be feeling isolated. This is a great time to use your church directory as your guide.
You may also want to consider the following, some local and some global.

From our presiding bishop
https://community.elca.org/emailviewonwebpage.aspx?erid=cc068be7-4986-42d9-880d-0aa1bc3c338d&trid=cc068be7-4986-42d9-880d-0aa1bc3c338d

Lutheran Disaster Response
https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Relief-and-Development/Lutheran-Disaster-Response/Our-Impact/Coronavirus
Lutheran World Relief
https://lwr.org/

Mid-Michigan Flooding
Using funds from the North/West Lower Michigan Synod Disaster Relief Fund, the Synod has supplied food, water, cleaning supplies, and baby care supplies to shelters and sites in Gladwin and Midland counties. The Synod has also joined Michigan Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster as the ELCA is a member of the national organization to help assist those affected.

Much of the initial cleanup has finished and Pastor David Sprang is now talking with rostered ministers, county officials, and other church disaster organizations to see what role the Synod and Lutheran Disaster Response will play in the long term recovery plan for Mid- Michigan. Thank you to all who have donated and helped support our work in helping those affected by the flooding. We are continuing to collect funds for recovery efforts through the North/West Lower Michigan Synod Disaster Relief Fund. In addition, Thrivent is offering a matching gift program that will assist Mid-Michigan and the Midland/Gladwin Community Foundation is also collecting gifts.

Youth
Are you in grades 6-12? Please join us for youth group activities! For more info, contact Scott at *scottgaspari@outlook.com or (Cell) 847-373-8825.*

LEARNING

Saron is a congregation seeking to become more fluent in the first language of faith, the language of Scripture, in order that we might live into our calling as a people renewed, enlivened, empowered and sent by the Word.

Tuesday Evening Men's Bible Study
We are doing our study online at 6:00pm on Tuesdays with the use of "Zoom." Each week, I will send out an "invitation" to you showing the link to the study. The invitation will also include the lessons that will be studied. If you are not sure if I have your email, please send it to me (Bob) so that I can send you the link and information.

For more information call Bob Kynast at 269-921-2786 or bobkynast@gmail.com or Don Hafer at 269-985-3637 or hafer.don@gmail.com. All men are invited to join us.

As the Bible says "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another" (Proverbs 27:17).

THURSDAY MORNING WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Explore The Sermon on the Mount!
Explore the most popular sermon ever delivered!

A new study begins September 10. The group will meet virtually from 9:30-11:00 a.m. via Zoom. Cost of the book is $12.00. Contact Pastor if you are interested. New folks are always welcome!

The Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5-7, contains some of Jesus' most profound and most memorable teachings. What might these teachings have meant to his disciples and to the others who first heard them? How do they enhance our reading of the rest of the Gospel of Matthew, and how do they speak across the centuries to listeners today? How, if we pay careful attention to his words, does Jesus provide us a road map to living as God would have us live?

In *Sermon on the Mount: A Beginner's Guide to the Kingdom of Heaven,* Dr. Amy-Jill Levine introduces the major topics in the Sermon on the Mount, explains historical and theological contexts, and shows how the words of Jesus echo his Jewish tradition and speak forward to reach hearts and minds today. Here is the promo: https://youtu.be/uBlkfH263nQ

Men's monthly Bible Devotions and Breakfast

There will be NO Men's monthly Bible Breakfast in September.

Women of the ELCA.

DEBORAH CIRCLE

Deborah Circle will meet by way of Zoom on Wednesday, September 9, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. The lesson titled Holy Time, p. 20-25, will be from the September 2020 issue of Gather magazine. Denise Cook will lead the study. Pastor Oleson will email the Zoom log-on directions to everyone.

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

For quite a few years, our congregation has generously contributed to Lutheran World Relief, in particular, personal care kits, fabric kits, and also cash donations for shipping costs. This year, due to the corona virus, our collection will be monetary donations only. This format will eliminate a number of personal contact and logistical issues. If you wish to participate, please send your check payable to LWR Quilt & Kits Shipping Fund. Thank you very much in advance for your generosity in supporting this ministry. Many people benefit from this project.

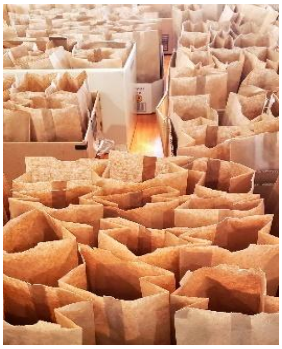
Hospitality

Watch for more news as we get closer to getting back together in person.

Outreach

BENTON HARBOR SOUP KITCHEN

On July 23rd Deb Standen, and Dave & Kathie Bradley packed 120 sack lunches to be served at the Benton



Harbor Soup Kitchen. To keep everyone healthy the lunch, water & a warm greeting are not served inside thedining room but are given to the clients outside the soup kitchen. This has become the new "norm" so if you haven't been called in a while to serve this is the reason! During this pandemic it is even more important to continue Saron's mission of *Joyfully sharing God's love for all!*

Thank you to all who continue to support this ministry with your time, contributions, & prayers.

After the church building opens **large cans of fruit will be needed at the Soup Kitchen** & can be dropped off anytime at the church. Any questions or to volunteer or provide cookies at a later date please contact Kathie Bradley at 269-427-7083.

INCLUSIVITY TASK FORCE

A task force at Saron has been looking at issues of welcome and inclusivity and how to best live into our mission of "joyfully sharing God's love for all!!!" As noted, the task force is working toward the possibility of Saron becoming a Reconciling In Christ congregation, that is a congregation intentional in its welcome of those in the LGBTQIA+ community.

Available at Saron's kiosk are several resources that can help individuals further explore various topics and aid in our conversations and welcoming. Serving on the task force are Kati and Nick Hooper, Laurel Gacek, Laura Hicks, Darlene Kiessel and Pastor. Contact any of these folks if you would like to know more.

Interfaith Action
SW Michigan Peace & Justice Collaborative

On September 15th at 6pm Interfaith Action of SW Michigan will host a community discussion via Zoom on Valeria Luiselli's book "Tell Me How It Ends". The book discussion is part of the organization's six month series on migration. To participate in the discussion, individuals can join by Zoom:
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84674400285?pwd=U0VNZ1VRVUc5R05UWFRaYzBkN2VpUT09
Meeting ID: 846 7440 0285
Passcode: 745070

Support

A Special Message for Travelers and Those Who Prefer Electronic Giving

Saron offers the option to give electronically for your convenience. Please contact the church office if you have any questions or to enroll. Thanks.

Tax Incentives during the Covid-19 Pandemic

"Above-the-line" tax deduction for charitable contributions

The federal government recently passed legislation to provide financial relief to families as a result of Covid-19. As part of the CARES Act, for the purpose of increasing the work of charitable organizations, individual taxpayers will receive new tax incentives for making charitable donations. The provision encourages individuals to contribute to religious, charitable, and educational organizations by creating a new "above-the-line" deduction (i.e. for taxpayers who take the standard deduction). This deduction permits deduction of up to $300 of annual monetary contributions. This is applicable for tax years beginning after 2019, and does not sunset after 2020. A related provision increases the limitations on deductions for charitable contributions by individuals who do itemize. For those individuals, the 50% of adjusted gross income limitation is suspended for cash contributions made in 2020.

For members over 72 years old drawing income from an IRA, the Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) is waived for 2020, thereby reducing your tax burden. Effective January 1, 2020, the CARES Act waived RMDs for defined contribution 401(k) plans, 403(b) plans, governmental 457(b) plans, and IRAs for calendar year 2020. The waiver applies to RMDs to be made in 2020 and to 2019 RMDs that were due by April 1, 2020 (if not already made in 2019). The good news is that Qualified Charitable Distributions can still be made directly from an IRA account to the church that will both benefit our ministry and reduce the member's taxable income. As always, members are advised to check with their tax advisor for the latest information and interpretations before filing.

Saron Lutheran Church Outreach Committee Chaired by Scott Kohs and Karen Johnson

Despite the fact that life at Saron has been far from normal since mid-March 2020 and the Outreach Committee has had to step away from person-to-person community involvements, Scott and Karen have found a way for church members to participate in a very worthwhile project. Typically, the Sunday after Labor Day weekend has become a day to do "God's Work….Our Hands." In the past, members of Saron have donated their time and energies in more physical projects. Simultaneously, we've usually selected a school to receive much needed school supplies. This fall, because of social distancing constraints in the midst of a pandemic, the Outreach Committee has decided to pour all our energies into gathering school supplies for the Lybrook Elementary School in Eau Claire, Michigan. Keith Stevens has made all the arrangements with the elementary school administration who will happily accept out-of-school donations. Since this is Saron's only outreach project, we hope many members of Saron will participate.

Donated items can include, but are not limited to, lined notepads, construction paper, crayons, colored pencils, regular pencils, erasers, glue sticks, Kleenex, etc. etc. and….especially…bottles of hand sanitizers.
We are limiting the school products drive to just one week for the ease of everyone. Items may be dropped off at the backdoor patio area of the home of Karen Johnson, 1225 Lake Boulevard, St. Joseph, MI. Right in Saron's neighborhood! There will be a large plastic covered bin by the door for your convenience.
Collection dates: Sunday, September 6 through Sunday, September 13, 2020.

If God is willing, Saron Lutheran Church will resume in-person worship with strict social distancing protocols in place, on Sunday, September 13, 2020. If this is the case, school supplies may be brought in to the narthex on that Sunday.

Scott and Karen look forward to your contributions for Saron's "God's Work…Our Hands" 2020 community project!

STOCK DONATIONS

Saron partners with TD Ameritrade, a brokerage firm, to accept stock donations. If you would like to donate stock, email Joe Ulrey to receive the account number to which the shares will be transferred. Once the transaction has been completed, email Joe the name of the stock, the number of shares, and the date of the transfer. This allows the transaction to be completed and ensures it is included on your giving statement. Thanks! Joe Ulrey josephulrey@yahoo.com

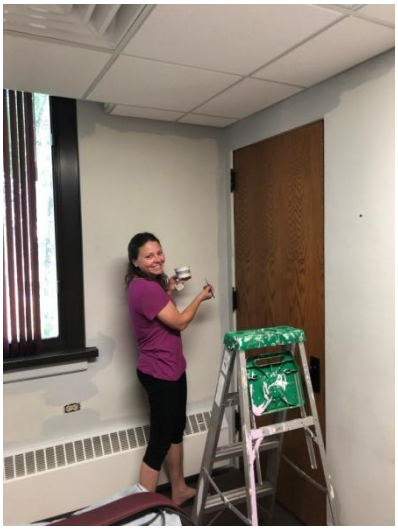
Colleen and Dennis Lundgren led the worship servce while Pastor was on vacation

Marcus Roll providing musical leadership each Sunday

Pastor giving Children's Message

Irma Gorman leads the service with prelude and postlude

Thanks to Deb Standen and crew for their work in the courtyard as well as to all the mowers who help beautify our lawn



The transformation of the lounge and offices has begun!

A “Hug in a Box” was delivered to some grateful kids

SARON LUTHERAN CHURCH
510 MAIN STREET
ST. JOSEPH, MI 49085

Website: www.saronlutheran.org
Email:info@saronlutheran.org

A Congregation of:
The North/West Lower Michigan Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

September 2020
We're on Facebook! Like us at
www.facebook.com/saronlutheranchurchst.joseph

We are currently holding our worship services via ZOOM at 11 a.m. each week. Please email the church office if you need more information. Also, know that we will update you, to the best of our ability, with news as to any changes, as we work to go inside and in-person. We are watching guidelines closely and seek to do our part in keeping everyone safe and healthy. Be well!

September 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 6:00 p.m. Men's Bible Study. Via Zoom	**2** 11:00a.m. Virtual Coffee Via Zoom	**3** 9:30 a.m. Bible Study Via Zoom	**4**	**5** NO Men's Devotion/Breakfast
6 Worship at 11:00 a.m. Via Zoom NO Worship at Tiscornia Park	**7** Office Closed Labor Day	**8** 6:00 p.m. Men's Bible Study. Via Zoom	**9** 11:00a.m. Virtual Coffee Via Zoom	**10** 9:30 a.m. Bible Study Via Zoom	**11**	**12**
13 Worship at 11:00 a.m. Via Zoom with In-Person TBD	**14** 11:00 a.m. Prayer Time (in homes) 6:00 p.m. Support Comm. Via Zoom	**15** 6:00 p.m. Men's Bible Study. Via Zoom	**16** 11:00a.m. Virtual Coffee Via Zoom	**17** 9:30 a.m. Bible Study Via Zoom	**18**	**19**
20 Worship at 11:00 a.m. Via Zoom with In-Person TBD	**21** 11:00 a.m. Prayer Time (in homes) 7:00 p.m. Church Council Meeting Via Zoom Newsletter articles due	**22** 6:00 p.m. Men's Bible Study. Via Zoom	**23** 11:00a.m. Virtual Coffee Via Zoom	**24** 9:30 a.m. Bible Study Via Zoom 9:00 a.m. Soup Kitchen	**25**	**26**
27 Worship at 11:00 a.m. Via Zoom with In-Person TBD	**28** 11:00 a.m. Prayer Time (in homes)	**29** 6:00 p.m. Men's Bible Study. Via Zoom	**30** 11:00a.m. Virtual Coffee Via Zoom			